

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-16 canceled.

17. (new) A method for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said method comprising:

- a) establishing a direct serial connection between a firmware device and a download computing device;
- b) establishing a network connection between said download computing device, a web-based device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;
- c) uploading firmware configuration data, over said network connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said web server using said web-based administration utility;
- d) storing said firmware configuration data on said web server;
- e) erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration data, from said firmware device;
- f) loading a new firmware structure from said download computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection;
- g) loading said firmware configuration data from said web server to said firmware device over said network connection.

18. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising converting said configuration data to a format compatible with said new firmware structure using said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.
19. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising modifying said configuration data with said web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.
20. (new) A method as described in claim 17 further comprising querying network elements to ascertain additional configuration data needed by said new firmware structure.
21. (new) A method as described in claim 20 further comprising combining said additional configuration data with said configuration data using said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.

22. A system for preserving configuration data during firmware modification, said

method comprising:

- a) a firmware device;
- b) a download computing device;
- c) a web-based device administration utility on a web server;
- d) a direct serial connection between said firmware device and said download computing device;
- e) a network connection between said download computing device, said web-based device administration utility on a web server and said firmware device;
- f) an uploader for uploading firmware configuration data, over said network connection, from an existing firmware structure in said firmware device to said web server using said web-based administration utility;
- g) storage, on said web server, for storing said firmware configuration;
- h) an eraser process for erasing firmware, including said firmware configuration data, from said firmware device;
- i) a firmware loader for loading a new firmware structure from said download computing device to said firmware device over said direct serial connection;
- j) a configuration loader for loading said firmware configuration data from said web server to said firmware device over said network connection.

23. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a converter for
converting said configuration data to a format compatible with said new firmware
structure using said web-based device administration utility on said web server
prior to said loading said firmware configuration data.

24. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a modifier for modifying
said configuration data with said web server prior to said loading said firmware
configuration data.

25. (new) A system as described in claim 22 further comprising a query process for
querying network elements to ascertain additional configuration data needed by
said new firmware structure.

26. (new) A system as described in claim 25 further comprising a combiner for
combining said additional configuration data with said configuration data using
said web-based device administration utility on said web server prior to said
loading said firmware configuration data.